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Russian composer Nikolai Kapustin (b. 1937) has written a considerable body of repertoire for solo piano, but he was largely unknown and much of his music was inaccessible in the West until the early 2000s. His Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59 (1991) are virtually unknown in mainstream piano literature. The delayed circulation of Kapustin's music was due to a variety of factors, not least of which was the controlled nature of the Soviet region where Kapustin was writing for the entire first part of his career. Now that his music has begun to become known among musicians, particularly pianists for whom most of his work is written, it enjoys ever-increasing amounts of recognition.

Kapustin's music is always intense, whether through rhythmic drive or textural complexity, and his blend of classical and jazz sources is unique. Kapustin was not the first to merge these traditionally distinct languages into a single voice, but the fluency of his style is what most often catches his audience's attention. Nearly all of Kapustin's music invites the question: is it classical or jazz?

Not until the 2000s has Kapustin's work gained recognition through recordings, frequent performances of his pieces, as well as various publications and presentations. Most of the scholarly writing on Kapustin is in the form of dissertations and journal articles that so far have only specifically addressed and analyzed a relatively small amount of his work. No formal research has been conducted on the Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59 to date.

This paper provides brief biographical information on the composer, background on jazz musicians in the USSR, and a discussion of Kapustin's musical style as observed in his pieces. The fourth section of this document describes each of Kapustin's Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59 in some detail, noting structural and stylistic features, as well as technical and musical concerns of the performer.

NIKOLAI KAPUSTIN'S TEN BAGATELLES, OP. 59

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Closing the gap between classical and jazz styles, Nikolai Kapustin, born in 1937, holds a unique place in the canon of 20th- and 21st-century piano literature. Kapustin draws from a broad range of musicians in both classical and jazz history. In his compositions, he employs the bebop licks of Charlie Parker, the quartal voicings of McCoy Tyner, and the virtuosity of Art Tatum. At the same time, traces of the composer's classical education are evident in his pieces. While the vast majority of Kapustin's works are titled and formally structured in classical idioms like prelude, fugue, sonata, and concerto, the harmonic language is never far from jazzy. The contrapuntal textures of his preludes and fugues might resemble J.S. Bach but harmonically relate better to Bill Evans. The piano sonatas are constructed in the forms of Mozart and Beethoven, but his inimitable voice somehow sounds more like Rachmaninoff mixed with an American novelty pianist from the 1920s. Given the jazzy sound of his music, Kapustin's birth in Ukraine, education at the Moscow Conservatory, and lifelong residence in the Soviet Union/Russia are surprising aspects of his biography.

Initially he was educated solely in the classical piano tradition. It wasn't until his teenage years that he first heard jazz and began to explore this different idiom. During the late 1950s, Kapustin began to maintain a dual existence in the worlds of classical music and jazz. During the day he studied at the Moscow Conservatory and followed the

traditional path of the great Russian Romantics who came before him. By night however, he performed with his own jazz quintet at restaurants and jazz clubs around town. Through his absorption of the underground jazz aesthetic in Soviet Russia, Kapustin's classically trained musical background broadened, effectively fusing the two styles to create his own personal language. In this paper, the Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59 will provide such an example.

While Kapustin is by no means the first classical musician to include jazz idioms in his work, he does present a distinctive blend of influences that constitutes a unique voice. The focus of this study is to demonstrate the influences, style, and artistic merit of Nikolai Kapustin's piano music, particularly through discussion and analysis of his Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59, written and published in 1991.

Falling in the middle of Kapustin's compositional career thus far, the bagatelles are not among his most performed pieces. The word "bagatelle" means "trifle" in French and refers to something of little importance. Although quite a few major composers have written bagatelles, most lie on the fringes of their oeuvre. Besides Beethoven's, the list of famous bagatelles in the piano repertoire is quite short. Of his works, Kapustin's sets of etudes and piano sonatas attract the most attention. Opus 59 is his only set of bagatelles, and remains relatively obscure compared to the other more frequently performed pieces. He has also composed a set of Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues (Op. 82), Ten Inventions (Op. 73), Twenty-Four Preludes (Op. 53), several sets of etudes (Op. 40, Op. 67, and Op. 68), and other works that include several parts of a group. The bulk of Kapustin's larger pieces are piano sonatas and concertos, while many of his smaller

pieces are stand-alone works. For nearly fifteen years after their publication, only the composer recorded the bagatelles in full (*Jazz Portrait*, 1991). The ninth bagatelle appears on Marc-André Hamelin's CD made in 2004 (*Nikolai Kapustin Piano Music*), and John Salmon recorded Nos. 2, 5, and 8 in 2005 (*Nikolai Kapustin Piano Sonata 15, Preludes, Etudes, Bagatelles*). It wasn't until 2005 that the second complete recording of all ten bagatelles was created by Masahiro Kawakami (*Kapustin Piano Works Volume 2*).

Status of Related Research

Although Kapustin's performing and compositional career had already begun during his last few years at the Moscow Conservatory in the 1950s, his name and works remained largely unknown in the West until quite recently. Even in Russia and the Soviet Union, Kapustin's works were only known through his recordings and more locally in performance for many years. In the late 1950s he was a well-known and highly regarded pianist in the underground jazz community in Moscow, but his reputation did not extend past the city. Since jazz was heavily discouraged and endured strict censorship by the Soviet Union at the time, the spread of ideas and collaboration was minimal. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, publication and distribution of Russian music were slow. But since Marc-André Hamelin began programming Kapustin's second piano sonata in concerts worldwide, and with the release of Stephen Osborne's recording in 2000, there has been an explosion of interest in Kapustin's works. In the last decade dozens of CDs have been released, and performances of Kapustin's pieces have become increasingly common, particularly in academia through student and

faculty university performances, and on YouTube. Nikolai Petrov, the first major pianist to perform Kapustin's works, recorded many of the pieces available on YouTube, but the composer himself appears in many recordings performing his own solo piano works. Even with this new attention to Kapustin, scholarly writing on the composer is still relatively minimal. The Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59 are rarely mentioned. Writing on Kapustin most commonly exists in only liner notes or interview form, although there are a number of articles and dissertations that at least briefly discuss Kapustin and his works.¹ A brief article and partial works list appear in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. *Fanfare* and *Piano International Quarterly* have each published articles on the composer. Various conferences have hosted lectures about Kapustin in the past few years, including the Music Teachers National Association National Conference,²

¹ Some dissertations include "Late Twentieth-Century Piano Concert Etudes: A Style Study," by Eun Young Kang at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory; "Beyond Third Stream: Henry Martin's 'Preludes and Fugues' for Solo Piano" by Karen Rice at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, 2009; "The Toccata and the History of Touch: A Pianist's Survey of the Symbiosis of Style and Performance Practice of Selected Toccatas From Froberger to Muczynski" by Hye Won Lee at The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 2008; "From Sonata and Fantasy to Sonata-Fantasy: Charting a Musical Evolution" by Mami Hayashida at the University of Kentucky, 2007.

² John Salmon "Playing Kapustin" (presented at the Music Teachers National Association National Conference, New York City, New York, March 24, 2012).

the California Music Teachers Association Annual Convention in 2011,³ and conferences of the College Music Society.⁴

Jonathan Mann and Randall Creighton have each written dissertations on Kapustin at the University of Cincinnati in 2007 and the University of Arizona in 2009, respectively. Mann's dissertation, "Red, White, and Blue Notes: The Symbiotic Music of Nikolai Kapustin," discusses Kapustin's place in both jazz and classical genres, and specifically analyzes the Sonatina, Op. 100, Prelude No. 9 in E Major, Op. 53, and Fugue No. 1 in C Major, Op. 82. Creighton took a similar approach to a different set of pieces in his dissertation, "A Man of Two Worlds: Classical and Jazz Influences in Nikolai Kapustin's Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 53."

Document Outline

Since Nikolai Kapustin is relatively unknown, Chapter II of this document provides an overview of his education, performing, and compositional career, and the growing public reception to his works. This section will also survey some contemporary composers who used jazz in their works, as well as give a brief background on jazz musicians in the USSR during Kapustin's early musical career. The fact that this composer's stylistic foundation in jazz grew out of a time when that idiom was often

³ Evan Chow, "The Music of Nikolai Kapustin: Virtuositic Jazz in Classical Form" (presented at the Annual Convention of the Music Teachers Association of California, Oakland, California, July 2, 2011).

⁴ Holly Roadfelt, "Crossing the Third Stream: A Classical Pianist's Guide to Braving the Jazz Elements in the Works by Nikolai Kapustin" (presented at the College Music Society MidAtlantic/Northeast Super Regional Conference and the CMS South Central/Southern Super Regional Conference, Gettysburg, PA, April 3-5, 2008).

completely prohibited is worth noting. Chapter III explores stylistic characteristics of Kapustin's writing style as observed in his pieces as well as based on comments by the composer. Composers and specific pieces that influenced his writing will be identified and compared to Kapustin's own works. Chapter IV describes each of Kapustin's Ten Bagatelles, Op. 59 in some detail, noting structural and stylistic features, as well as technical and musical concerns of the performer.

The purpose of this document is to explore Kapustin's valuable yet virtually unknown Ten Bagatelles in detail and to advocate for their inclusion in mainstream piano literature. By exploring Kapustin's stylistic traits and specific aspects of his pieces, the author seeks to provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Ten Bagatelles. The author also seeks to provide the opportunity for further exposure and appreciation of all of Kapustin's works. His works are just starting to break into the canon of keyboard literature in university, competition, and performance settings, and they will likely only continue to secure their place in the years to come.

CHAPTER II

NIKOLAI KAPUSTIN

Upon listening to his mostly extroverted, hypervirtuosic repertoire, one might expect Kapustin to maintain a vivacious, possibly flamboyant, but certainly dynamic public presence in the musical community. This is hardly the case with Kapustin. He currently lives in the culturally central Moscow, and enjoys a relatively reclusive lifestyle. Far from enjoying the spotlight, Kapustin nearly always shies away from public appearances or interviews. He rarely performs but instead devotes his time to building on his already large repertoire and recording his own works. He has become quite prolific in composition during his career, and to date, has written 149 opuses.

Kapustin's Education and Development

Born in Gorlovka, Ukraine in 1937, Kapustin's musical training began at the age of seven when he started taking piano lessons. From an early age he experimented with composition, finishing his first piano sonata at the age of thirteen. At this point though, his style was purely classical. The composer would not discover jazz until several years later. Kapustin's best-known teacher was Alexander Goldenweiser, with whom he studied at the Moscow Conservatory in the late 1950s. Goldenweiser also taught Dmitri Kabalevsky and counted Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff among his friends. Kapustin

however credits an earlier teacher as being a great guide in developing his pianistic skills: Avrelian Rubakh. Rubakh was Kapustin's first serious piano teacher, who, though he is not well known, studied alongside Russia's first jazz pianist Alexander Tsfasman (1906-1971) under Russian composer and pianist Felix Blumenfeld (1863-1931). Tsfasman later mentored Kapustin, strongly influencing the composer's style and technical approach to the keyboard.⁵ Kapustin began studying with Goldenweiser at the age of eighteen and related that his experience was less involved than with previous teachers. When asked to comment on Goldenweiser he once said,

Well it was very exciting to have contact with him. He was an old man by that time [aged 81] and of course he'd been a friend of Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Medtner – he even knew Tchaikovsky – and had many interesting stories about them. But as for piano teaching per se, he didn't give so much.⁶

Kapustin's musical training followed the path of many of his classical, Russian virtuoso pianist predecessors. His graduating piano recital program included such standard works as Liszt's B Minor Sonata and Beethoven's Sonata in F Major, Op. 54. In fact, as an adolescent he planned to pursue a performing career as a concert artist. Soon after his start at the conservatory, however, Kapustin discovered that his interests lay more in jazz and composition and that he had a distinct aversion to public performing.⁷ While he did

⁵ Jonathan Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes: The Symbiotic Music of Nikolai Kapustin" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2007), 33.

⁶ Quoted in Harriet Smith, "Bridging the Divide: An Interview with Kapustin," *International Piano Quarterly*, (Autumn 2000): 54-55.

⁷ Martin Anderson, "Nikolai Kapustin, Russian Composer of Classical Jazz," *Fanfare* (Sept/Oct 2000): 93-97.

not pursue his original dream of performing as a classical piano virtuoso, this strong educational foundation would inform what became his unique voice and musical style.

Kapustin began studying jazz at the age of sixteen during the same time that the realm of jazz was considered corrupt and dangerous. Later while studying at the conservatory during the day Kapustin spent evenings in jazz clubs and he formed his own quintet that performed regularly in Moscow. In 1957 Kapustin performed with the State Jazz Orchestra at an International Youth Festival in Moscow. This festival is significant for several reasons, most importantly for this discussion in that this was the first time an original work by Kapustin was performed. On a national level however, this was one of the first government-sanctioned jazz events in several decades, indicating the nuanced prohibition of jazz in the Soviet Union. Moscow was hosting the International Youth Festival where there was to be a jazz competition. Although the Soviet government feared Western influences on its own youth and did not comfortably support the gathering, they did have a strong interest in winning the competition and subsequently formed a jazz band of the best musicians in town (including Kapustin). As planned, the Russian jazz group won first prize over its western competitors, but rather than celebrating their success government officials criticized the group for misrepresenting the Russian culture.⁸

After his graduation in 1961, Kapustin joined Oleg Lundstrem's Jazz Orchestra and toured for the next decade. During this time he performed and composed,

⁸ Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union, 1917-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 249-250.

completing sixteen pieces from 1961-1972. In the 1970s Kapustin decided that he didn't want to make a career of performing as an independent jazz musician and left the orchestra. Regarding his jazz performances he said, "Yes, I can improvise, but I no longer like it."⁹ Instead of performing, he moved back to Moscow to focus on composition. Unlike many of his colleagues, Kapustin had a distinct advantage by maintaining ties with both the classical and jazz worlds. He could teach, perform, and compose, focusing on classical music when jazz was prohibited, then leaning towards jazz when it was permissible. Despite the government suspicion surrounding most jazz musicians, Kapustin said "I was entirely free; no problems. My music wasn't avant-garde."¹⁰ His music also showed enough classical formalities to avoid censorship but was also performable in the jazz culture.¹¹

Kapustin began establishing his compositional career during his years touring with the Lundstrem Orchestra, completing the pieces that make up his first seventeen opuses. After that decade with that group, however, he withdrew from performing and began to devote himself fully to composing and recording his own works. Kapustin's repertoire to date now amasses 144 opuses, and he is now more prolific than ever before. He currently lives in Moscow and leads a very disciplined and productive, if private, existence. Though he earnestly avoids public appearances or interviews to promote his

⁹ Quoted in Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 36.

¹⁰ Quoted in Anderson, "Nikolai Kapustin," 46.

¹¹ Mann, "Red, White, and Blue Notes," 36.

works, Kapustin continues to produce numerous YouTube video and audio recordings of his own works.

Jazz in the USSR

As mentioned above, one notable aspect of the jazz influence on Kapustin's style is the environment in which it developed. Jazz was hardly a welcome part of the government-approved culture during the repressive years of the Soviet Union in Russia when the composer was coming of age as a musician. Alexander Alexandrov, a Moscow jazz musician, recalled his experience with the KGB at a jazz club in Moscow: "Many times in the 1980s some well-dressed gentlemen might arrive and switch off the electricity."¹² While many musicians and artists fell victim to the tight stylistic constraints, Kapustin maintained a low profile and participated in both the more conventional classical music field as well as the supposedly insurgent jazz sphere.

The first signs of jazz in Russia appeared in the 1920s and 30s, but it was seen as decadent and crude. It was frequently the victim of censorship throughout Kapustin's formative years. At the end of the 1940s, jazz and jazz musicians began to be persecuted. By the early 1950s students could be expelled and teachers fired from conservatories for pursuing jazz.¹³ The government strove to eradicate the entire jazz field (as well as any

¹² Quoted in Peter Culshaw, "How Jazz Survived the Soviets," *Telegraph*, November 16, 2006, under "Culture," <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/rockandjazzmusic/3656544/How-jazz-survived-the-Soviets.html> (accessed 11 April 2012).

¹³ Wendell Logan, trans. Satrina Yrina, "The Development of Jazz in the Former Soviet Union: An Interview with Victor Lebedov," *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Autumn 1992), 229.

other cultural area they found threatening) but an underground jazz scene always managed to not only exist, but thrive in the USSR.¹⁴

Public Reception to Kapustin's Works

Given his somewhat reclusive nature and the historically suppressive society in which he worked, Kapustin's music was practically unknown outside Moscow until the 2000s. In the 1950s he was known in the area as a pianist, arranger, and composer, but at the time few knew him outside the context of his performing groups at the time. The Soviet State Music Publishing House, Musyka, first published his works in the 1970s but these works rarely circulated beyond the confines of the region. Pianist Nikolai Petrov was an early champion of Kapustin's music, and it was through Petrov's concerts that this new music became known in Japan and Germany. In fact, in 1999 the only recordings of Kapustin's music available in the West were those by Petrov.¹⁵ Kapustin had previously produced vinyl recordings in 1986 and 1989 through Melodiya, but those were only available in the East until Bohème Music reissued them on CD some ten years later.¹⁶ The collapse of the Soviet Union also halted publication of Russian music, so it was through Petrov that Steven Osborne came to know and obtain copies of Kapustin's musical scores. He recorded two sonatas and thirteen preludes for a Hyperion CD released in 2000. During that same year Marc-André Hamelin performed an international

¹⁴ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 230.

¹⁵ Two Olympia CDs were released in 1990 and 1991.

¹⁶ Smith, "Bridging the Divide," *International Piano Quarterly*, 54.

tour that included the second piano sonata, and this seemed to be the time that the public reception of Kapustin's music began to really gain momentum. The Kapustin Society in England formed with the purpose of authorizing dissemination of his scores, and in post-Soviet Russia A-RAM and Prhythm bought all rights to his works. In 2004 the London Music Trading Company (MusT) signed on with A-RAM to publish and distribute Kapustin's printed scores. The same occurred with Prhythm in 2007.

The increased contemporary presence through the more frequent international performances and accessibility to Kapustin scores brought greater attention to the composer from pianists, students, and other classical and/or jazz enthusiasts. As previously mentioned, dozens of recordings of or by Kapustin are accessible on YouTube, and his continued popularity is evidenced on Spotify, Pandora, Facebook, and other popular Internet sources. The growing public reception to his works is evidenced by their frequent appearances on the repertoire lists in piano competitions, recitals, and conference or workshop presentations. Kapustin's presence in these public areas has started to give his works a place in the canon of performing and teaching literature, particularly in the area of solo piano.

Defining Kapustin's Style

Part of Kapustin's musical appeal is its unmistakably jazzy sound. Certainly Kapustin was not the first to merge these traditionally distinct styles into one musical language, but the seamless combination and fluency of his style is what most often catches his audience's attention. Nearly all of Kapustin's music invites the question: is it

classical or jazz? Early in the twentieth century composers were attracted to the exotic quality of jazz. Evidence of the influence of ragtime appears in Claude Debussy's "Golliwog's Cakewalk" from 1908. Maurice Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major was deeply influenced by the jazz idioms and harmonies he heard on a concert tour of the United States.¹⁷ Likewise, Charlie Parker used to study the scores of Stravinsky during his bus commute, and famously quoted Stravinsky's opening bassoon solo to *Rite of Spring* at a jazz festival in Paris in 1949.¹⁸ In Russia, Stravinsky's *Ragtime* (1917-18) and "Piano Rag Music" (1919) show that this trend was not limited to the West. Countless other examples of stylistic mingling appear in classical music, but most composers fall primarily in either the classical or jazz realm and use the other for an extra facet of their style. In theory, Kapustin's music could be described as falling entirely within the jazz idiom. Even though his works lack the element of improvisation, his harmonic language and technical style are clearly jazz-based. The problem with this single identification lies in the composer's self-identification as a classical composer as well as the musicians and audiences who seek out his pieces. Kapustin's works are painstakingly specific and overflowing with detailed figuration, and jazz musicians who enjoy the freedom of improvisation can find this quality stifling. Classical musicians, however, often thrive on specificity in notation, and Kapustin's music welcomes the non-improvising musician to explore a jazz idiom within the structure of a written score.

¹⁷ Michael Russ, "Ravel and the Orchestra," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 133.

¹⁸ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996).

CHAPTER III

MUSICAL STYLE

Stylistic Influences

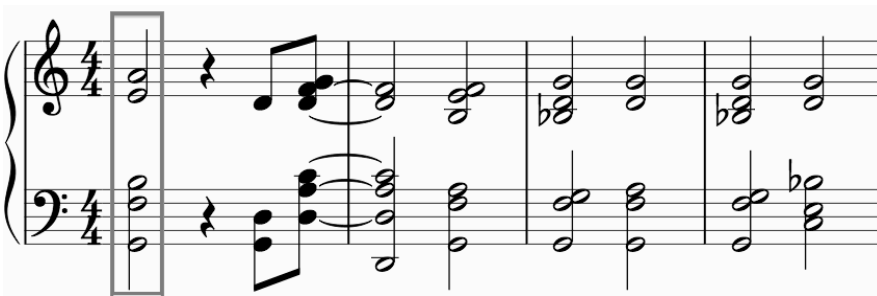
Even a cursory hearing reveals a myriad of influences by other jazz pianists and composers on Kapustin's work. Though he credits Oscar Peterson as his greatest inspiration, Kapustin's work suggests considerable familiarity with composers ranging from J.S. Bach to Herbie Hancock. Kapustin's success at making such a diverse blend of stylistic influences coalesce into his own unique sound is notable. The following discussion will illustrate some examples where the voices of other musicians are perceptible in Kapustin's works.

A major stylistic trait that Kapustin shared with his musical predecessors was the use of rich jazz harmonies. For example, big-band voicings appear in many of Kapustin's works. In *Bagatelle II*, measure 12 echoes the standard quartal big band voicing of a dominant 13th chord as in Neal Hefti's "Lil' Darlin'" (as performed most famously by Count Basie's band in 1957), shown in Figures 1 and 2

Figure 1. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, m.12



Figure 2. Basie, “Lil Darlin,” mm. 37-40



This quartal harmony, whether in a tonal or modal context, was a common trait in the music of Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, and Herbie Hancock, and all these musicians most certainly affected the development of Kapustin’s style. Ellington was one of the few jazz musicians appearing on Russian radio stations during Kapustin’s youth, and strongly influenced Oleg Lundstrem’s big band orchestra.¹⁹ Kapustin’s ten years of experience with that group most certainly helped form the development of his compositional style. Ellington’s quartal voicing can be seen in the fourth measure of his setting of “The Gal from Joe’s” (1938) in Figure 3, which duplicates the “Lil Darlin’” voicing.

¹⁹ Starr, *Red and Hot*, 226.

Figure 3. Ellington, “The Gal from Joe’s”²⁰



The quartal voicing in measure 9 of Kapustin’s Bagatelle II is similar to that found in Bill Evans’ “Turn Out the Stars” (1960) as shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, m.9



Figure 5. Evans, “Turn Out the Stars,” m. 60²¹



²⁰ Duke Ellington, “The Gal From Joe’s,” *Duke Ellington Anthology*, 26.

²¹ Bill Evans, “Turn Out the Stars,” from *Bill Evans Plays* (New York: Ludlow Music, 1966), 8.

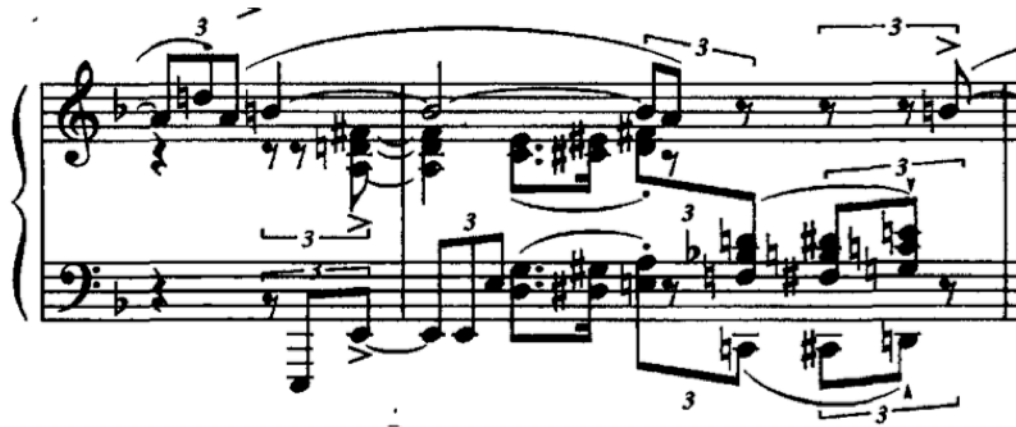
Perhaps the most famous example of the quartal voicing of Bill Evans appears in his “So What” chords with three perfect fourths and a third, as shown in Figure 6 from his recording of Miles Davis’ *Kind of Blue* (1959).

Figure 6. Evans, “So What”²²



In the same bagatelle by Kapustin, the composer writes parallel quartal voicings that are analogous to Herbie Hancock’s chromatically ascending setting in “The Sorcerer” (1968) (see Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, mm. 14-15



²² Example is referenced from Figure 12-2 in the chapter “So What Chords” in Mark Levine, *The Jazz Piano Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music, 1989), 97.

Figure 8. Hancock, “The Sorcerer,” mm.18-22²³



Kapustin and Evans share an affinity for voicing major and minor 7th chords in the 4/2 inversion. The distinct sound created by the major or minor second produces an aural “crunch,” or “scrunch” voicing as described by Peter Pettinger in his biography of Evans, especially when the distance is a minor second.²⁴ One such example of this “scrunch” chord appear in measure 76 of the fourth movement of Kapustin’s Sonata-Fantasia, Op. 39, seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Kapustin, Sonata-Fantasia, Op. 39, IV, m. 76²⁵



²³ Herbie Hancock. Transcribed by Bill Dobbins, “The Sorcerer,” *Herbie Hancock Classic Compositions and Piano Solos* (Germany: Advance Music, 1992), 22.

²⁴ Peter Pettinger, *Bill Evans: How My Heart Sings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 112.

²⁵ Nikolai Kapustin, *Sonata No. 1 (Sonata-Fantasia), Op. 39* (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1984), 38.

Kapustin also uses 4/2 voicings to color several moments throughout the Bagatelles, Op. 59 as shown in measure 25 of Bagatelle VI in Figure 10. The piano music of Bill Evans contains numerous examples of this “scrunch” 4/2 chord. Some instances of such a voicing appear in Evans’ “All of You” (1961), “Funkarello” (1971), and “Only Child” (1966), as shown in Figures 11-13.

Figure 10. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, m. 25



Figure 11. Evans, “All of You,” 2nd chorus²⁶



²⁶ Evans, *Bill Evans Plays*, 13.

Figure 12. Evans, “Funkareello,” mm. 315-316²⁷



Figure 13. Evans, “Only Child,” m. 76²⁸



Although Kapustin was likely influenced by Evans, this intentionally dissonant effect could have come from several possible sources. Besides Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock also used “scrunch” chords (see Figure 14) and, in the classical realm, Maurice Ravel’s music was peppered with similarly voiced chords.

²⁷ Bill Evans, “Funkareello,” *Bill Evans Trio, Vol. 3* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003), 66.

²⁸ Evans, *Bill Evans Plays*, 31.

Figure 14. Hancock, “Oliloqui Valley,” m. 139, m. 143²⁹



Ravel's Toccata from *Le Tombeau de Couperin* bears striking resemblance to Kapustin's third etude from Op. 40, the Toccata, which also includes "scrunch" voicing. The same voicing appears in Kapustin's Bagatelle VII, also in the same key (see Figures 15-17).

Figure 15. Ravel, Toccata from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, m. 1-4



²⁹ Hancock, *Classic Jazz*, 8.

Figure 16. Kapustin Toccata, m. 1³⁰



Figure 17. Bagatelle VII, mm. 18-19



This example also leads to other defining qualities of Kapustin’s music, which include his explicit references and quotations of other iconic works from the classical repertoire. For example, not only do Ravel’s Toccata and Kapustin’s Toccata share the use of “scrunch” chords, but they also share a common key and textural construction. In measure 7 of Kapustin’s Toccata, the repeated Es that mirror the first measures of Ravel make the connection between the two unmistakable (see Figures 18-19).

³⁰ Nikolai Kapustin, *Toccata, Eight Concert Études, Op. 40* (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1983), 20.

Figure 18. Kapustin, Toccatina, mm. 7-8



Figure 19. Ravel, Toccata, mm. 1-4³¹



In a different case where Kapustin references another work, he again gestures to his classical upbringing. In the Toccatina from Op. 40, the texture suddenly changes in measure 66 from a fragmented, rhythmically-driven section to one with a longer melodic line and lyricism that harkens back to measure 19 of Chopin's famous "Revolutionary" Etude (see Figure 20-21).

³¹ Nikolai Kapustin, *Toccatina* (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1983), 20.

Figure 20. Kapustin, Toccata, mm. 56-57³²



Figure 21. Chopin, Etude Op. 10, No. 12, mm.19-20



In a nod to a different composer, Kapustin echoes a motive from George Gershwin's setting of "Swanee" in the grace note gesture in the 22nd measure of his Bagatelle V (see Figures 22 and 23).

³² Kapustin, *Toccata*, 25.

Figure 22. Gershwin, “Swanee,” mm. 9-10³³



Figure 23. Kapustin, Bagatelle V, mm. 22-23



Kapustin also references Gershwin in his third etude from Op. 40. In measures 44-45 the melody includes a direct quotation from “It Ain’t Necessarily So” from *Porgy and Bess* (see Figures 24 and 25).

³³ George Gershwin, *George Gershwin Complete Piano Solos* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 2007), 112.

Figure 24. Kapustin, Etude III, mm. 44-45³⁴



Figure 25. Gershwin, “It Ain’t Necessarily So”



These references to Chopin, Ravel, and Gershwin show Kapustin’s background in the “classics,” and form a part of his distinctive style. The explicit quotations (of the Ravel Toccata, Chopin “Revolutionary” Etude, and Gershwin “It Ain’t Necessarily So”) also show Kapustin’s wit, as if winking at his equally knowledgeable audience.

Unique Musical Features

Other characteristics of Kapustin’s music can be attributed to the composer’s personal compositional style, rather than pulling from the works of earlier musicians. For instance, many of his pieces use perpetual motion to create rhythmic drive and intensity. This breathless, inexorable forward motion becomes a characteristic of much of his

³⁴ Kapustin, *Eight Concert Études*, Op. 40, 24.

compositional output, even when the words “moto perpetuo” are not used. In his second sonata, Kapustin entitles the fourth movement “Perpetuum mobile” (see Figure 26). After seeing the tempo and figuration in the score, the title actually seems redundant.

Figure 26. Kapustin, 2nd Sonata, Op. 54, IV, mm.1-2³⁵



Other examples include his Prelude XIV of Op. 53 as well as his second impromptu from Op. 66, in which Kapustin writes in a similarly feverish manner and marks “Allegro meccanicamente” (see Figures 27 and 28).

³⁵ Nikolai Kapustin, *Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 54, IV* (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1989), 47.

Figure 27. Kapustin, Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 53, XIV, mm.1-2³⁶



Figure 28. Kapustin, Three Impromptus, Op. 66, No. 2³⁷



The rhythmic intensity and nonstop motion of many of Kapustin's works mirror the same qualities found in two of his prime influences: Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson. Kapustin's music never leaves a moment of reprieve, whether rhythmically or harmonically. His relentlessly dynamic pieces do not always depend on perpetual rhythmic motion; he also creates motion by frequently changing tonal centers. In fact, there are numerous places where Kapustin modulates so frequently that a tonal center is barely perceivable. In

³⁶ Nikolai Kapustin, *Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 53* (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1988), 58.

³⁷ Nikolai Kapustin, *Three Impromptus, Op. 66* (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1991), 12.

Bagatelle III, for example, the composer passes through eleven key centers in the space of eleven measures (see Figure 29).

Figure 29. Kapustin, Bagatelle III, mm. 41-50

The image displays a musical score for Bagatelle III, measures 41-50. The score is written for piano and features a complex harmonic structure with rapid key changes. The key centers are indicated by labels below the staff: E min: (measure 41), A min: I (measure 42), G: ii (measure 43), D-flat: V (measure 44), F: (measure 45), E min: (measure 46), C: (measure 47), B: (measure 48), F: (measure 49), F-sharp: (measure 50), D: (measure 51), and G: (measure 52). The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass staves, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ff* and *p*. The key changes occur frequently, often within a single measure, creating a sense of harmonic instability and complexity.

Similarly in his twelfth Prelude, Op. 53, ten key areas are covered in ten bars, and the first movement of the second sonata includes similar harmonic complexity (see Figures 30 and 31).

Figure 30. Kapustin, Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 53, XII, mm. 48-57³⁸

48

mp

F: G-flat:

51

E: E-flat: G: C:

54

F: D: G:

57

B:

³⁸ Kapustin, *Twenty-Four Preludes, Op. 53*, 49.

Figure 31. Kapustin, Sonata No. 2, Op. 54, I, mm. 186-192³⁹

The image displays four systems of musical notation for a piano sonata. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with various musical notations including notes, rests, and triplets. Chord labels are placed below the staves to indicate the harmonic structure.

- System 1:** The first system shows a progression from F major (F:) to A-flat major (A-flat:). It features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a single eighth note in the left hand.
- System 2:** The second system shows a progression from F minor (Fmin:) to E-flat major (E-flat:). It includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a single eighth note in the left hand.
- System 3:** The third system shows a progression from D minor (Dmin:) to B-flat major (B-flat:), then to E major (E:), and finally to E-flat major (E-flat:). It includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a single eighth note in the left hand.
- System 4:** The fourth system shows a progression from A major (A:). It includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a single eighth note in the left hand.

³⁹ Kapustin, *Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 54*, 16.

Though he bounces so frequently from one key to the next that it is often difficult to feel aurally grounded in his music, Kapustin somehow still manages to maintain a sense of tonality and functional harmonic direction.

Another compositional device Kapustin uses that flirts with atonality without ever fully crossing over might be referred to as “faux dodecaphony.” He periodically gives the impression of twelve-tone rows without being entirely faithful to the Schoenbergian practice. In the scherzo movement of his second piano sonata, measure 25 sends both hands in parallel motion, two octaves apart, through a long chromatic passage that is only one note shy of completing a full dodecaphonic set (see Figure 32).

Figure 32. Kapustin, Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 54, II, Scherzo, mm. 25-26⁴⁰



In the fourth movement of his first piano sonata, the left hand breaks off into a walking bass line that, though it seems like a familiar musical device, uses such an unpredictable chromatic line that it appears dodecaphonic at first glance (see Figure 33).

⁴⁰ Kapustin, *Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 54*, 29.

Figure 33. Kapustin, Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 39, IV, mm. 120-124⁴¹



Other examples of this “faux dodecaphony” appear in Kapustin’s fifteenth prelude, Op. 53, measures 26-32, where the right hand filigree flies over a walking bass in the left, and all seem suspiciously chromatic and atonal (see Figure 34).

⁴¹ Kapustin, *Piano Sonata (Sonata-Fantasia) No. 1, Op. 39*, 25.

Figure 34. Kapustin, Prelude XV, Op. 53, mm.26-32⁴²



In his Prelude XX of the same opus, measures 1-5 exhibit a markedly different mood, with more pensive and lyrical melodic lines. Similarly, as seen in Figure 35, the first five measures of this prelude include a series of non-repeated chromatic tones.

⁴² Kapustin, *Twenty-Four Preludes*, Op. 53, 64.

Figure 35. Kapustin, Prelude XX, Op. 53, mm.1-5⁴³



Finally, Kapustin's "Raillery" etude from Op. 40 exhibits both his tendency towards motor rhythms as well as heavily chromatic lines (see Figure 36).

Figure 36. Kapustin, Raillery, Op. 40, mm. 1-8⁴⁴



⁴³ Kapustin, *Twenty-Four Preludes*, Op. 53, 82.

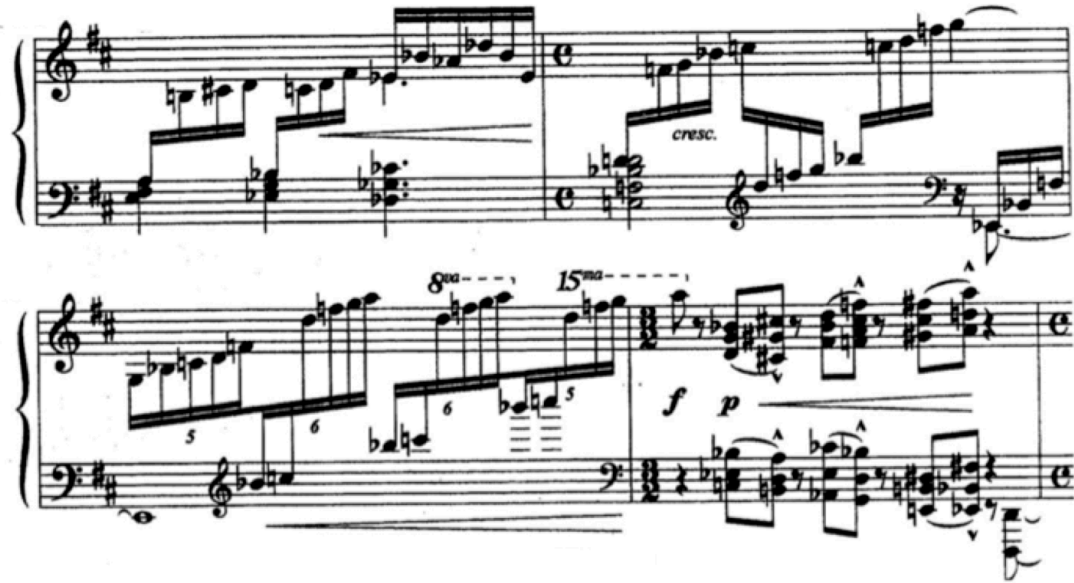
⁴⁴ Kapustin, *Eight Concert Etudes*, Op. 40, 41.

Even with this harmonic exploration and nearly perpetual instability, Kapustin never strays too far from the familiarity of a tonal center. The chromatic, “faux dodecaphonic” passages make appearances in the music but they are only moments coloring an otherwise tonal whole.

Aspects of Technique

Another major characteristic of Kapustin’s piano music is found in his approach to virtuosic writing. As nearly all of his pieces require the highest conceivable technical facility on the part of the performer, Kapustin also creates many instances of hand crossing which add to the visual effect for the audience. Often this technique benefits the pianist as in Figure 37 from the first movement of his first sonata. Here the higher range could indicate right hand alone but Kapustin writes hand crossing with specific redistribution, making a smooth, sweeping line easier to execute. In short, Kapustin writes music that fits well in the pianist’s hands (see Figure 37).

Figure 37. Kapustin, Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 39, I, mm. 123-126⁴⁵



Another similar use of this device appears at the end of Bagatelle II, measures 34-36 (see Figure 38). Other composers might have written the passage for right hand only, requiring the pianist either to master a more difficult passage or manually redistribute it with hand crossing. In this sense, Kapustin takes care in his music to assist the performer by clearly communicating technical information.

⁴⁵ Kapustin, *Piano Sonata No. 1 (Sonata-Fantasia)*, Op. 39, 14.

Figure 38. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, mm. 34-37



A third example where Kapustin reveals his own idiomatically aware pianism through hand distribution is in measure 148 of the last movement of his first sonata. Here the arrangement of hand crossing might contradict traditional fingering but allows for more physical ease. The right hand pattern begins and ends on white keys, while the hand that crosses over uses only black keys. A different composer might have used a traditional D-flat major scale fingering (even though the actual scale is D-flat Lydian),

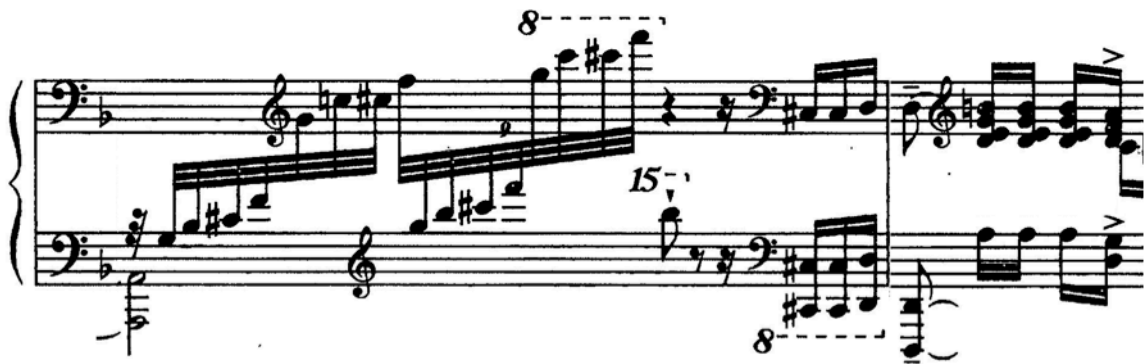
but Kapustin's hand crossing shows a keener awareness of what really works for the passage at hand (see Figure 39).

Figure 39. Kapustin, Sonata No. 1, Op. 39, IV, m. 148⁴⁶



Another such example with frequent hand crossing appears in Kapustin's fifth "Octaves" etude from Five Études in Different Intervals, Op. 68 (see Figure 40).

Figure 40. Kapustin, Etude V, Op. 68, mm. 37-38⁴⁷

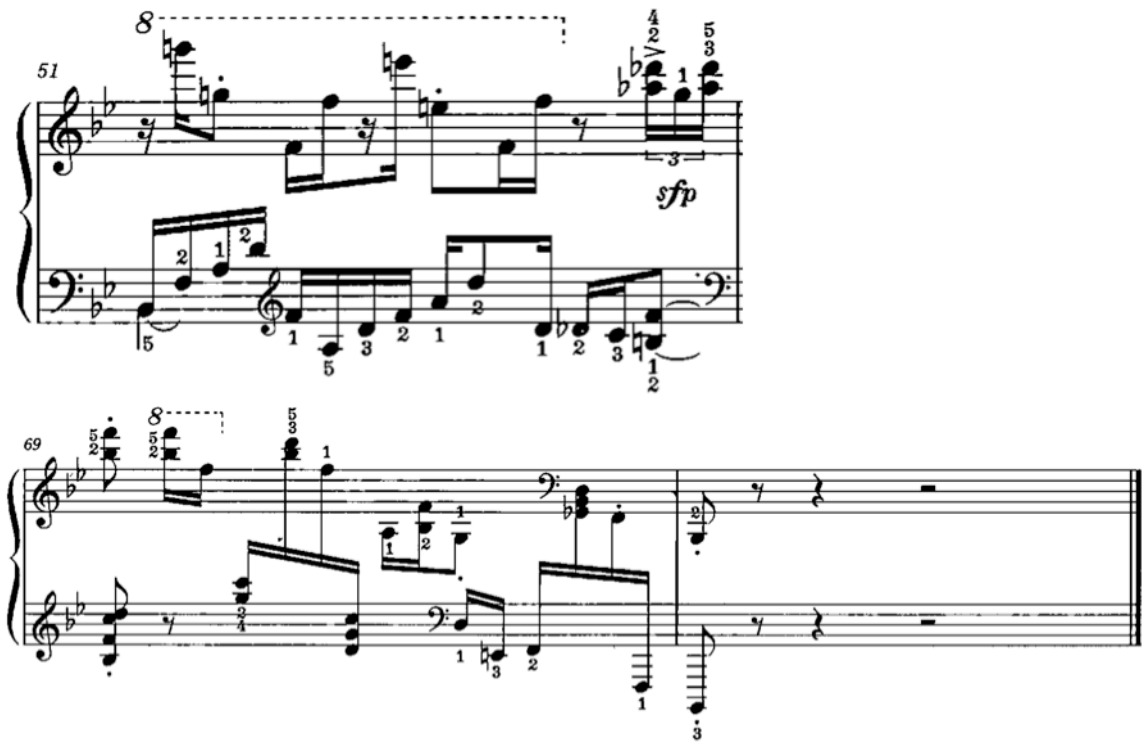


⁴⁶ Kapustin, *Piano Sonata No. 1 (Sonata-Fantasia)*, Op. 39, 45.

⁴⁷ Nikolai Kapustin, *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*, Op. 68 (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1992), 45.

This example in Etude V from Op. 68 demonstrates another favorite compositional device of Kapustin: use of the entire range of the keyboard. In some ways this expansive effect is reminiscent of the early Romantic-era composers who pushed the limits of the instrument with gestures that used the entire range of eighty-eight keys. In his Etude VI (“Pastorale”) from Op. 40 this effect is evident. By the time we reach m. 51 the primary theme has been repeated and varied with increasing intensity. This final iteration seems to have spiraled nearly out of control, widening the range to include the highest and lowest pitches in a matter of measures, bouncing off the outer ranges of the keyboard (see Figure 41). One gets the sense that, if the piano was larger, this section would have expanded to fill out even the most extreme pitch range.

Figure 41. Kapustin, Etude VI, Op. 40, m. 51, mm. 69-70⁴⁸



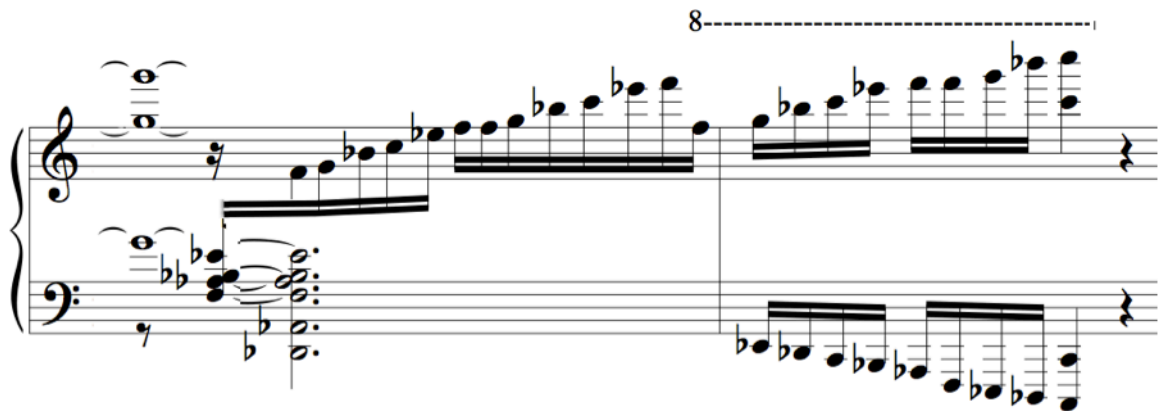
In another example from Op. 40, Etude I ends with rapid scales in contrary motion that end the piece on the outermost octaves on Cs. Seen from a different perspective, this device seems to illustrate an all-encompassing mastery of the instrument rather than challenging its limitations. Unlike Beethoven, whose music seems constricted by the limitations of his instrument (as in mm. 22, 271, and 272 of the first movement of Op. 10, No. 3), Kapustin is content with the range of the keyboard and relishes its full use (see Figures 42 and 43).

⁴⁸ Kapustin, *Eight Concert Etudes*, Op. 40, 55.

Figure 42. Beethoven, Op. 10 No. 3, mm. 21-22, mm. 271-272



Figure 43. Kapustin, Etude I, Op. 40, mm. 69-70⁴⁹



Kapustin's Bagatelles are not excluded from his wide-range settings, although several of the pieces do exist on a smaller scale. Bagatelles II, VI, and X each extend to the outermost octaves in their final bar (refer to Figures 38, 44 and 45).

⁴⁹ Kapustin, *Eight Concert Etudes*, Op. 40, 7.

Figure 44. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, mm. 88-91



Figure 45. Kapustin, Bagatelle X, mm. 129-132



Notation

An interesting quirk in Kapustin's music is his tendency to over-intellectualize notation, writing jazz chords in a classically academic way that no jazzer would ever do. As a general rule, these moments do follow classical theory standards but are often more difficult to decipher when an easier option is available. For instance, in Prelude XIII, Op. 53, measure 73 has an A-double-flat maj 9 add 6 chord that goes to a G-flat maj 7 chord. While according to classical music theory voice-leading rules, the descending half-step

motion into G-flat requires a double flat to precede it, most performers, particularly jazz players, would prefer to read G maj9 add 6 instead of A-double-flat major (see Figure 46).

Figure 46. Kapustin, Prelude XIII, Op. 53, m.73-75⁵⁰



Another harmony Kapustin spells in a learned way rather than one that is more practical appears in Bagatelle II, measure 21. On beat two he wrote a B-double-flat13 chord (see Figure 47). A more expected (and simpler) chord spelling would have been an A13 chord. Of course, Kapustin is not the first composer to over-intellectualize his notation: in Liszt's first "Valse Oubliée" (see Figure 48) the key is A-sharp minor, theoretically possible but much more cumbersome to the pianist than B-flat minor.

⁵⁰ Kapustin, *Twenty-Four Preludes*, Op. 53, 58.

Figure 47. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, m.21; with enharmonic respelling

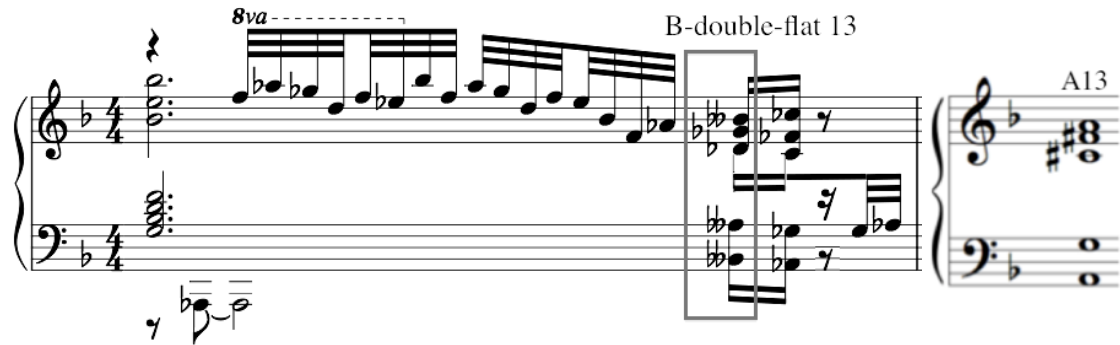


Figure 48. Liszt, Valse Oubliée No. 1, S. 115, mm. 33-38



Swing

Finally and perhaps most universal among his works, Kapustin’s notation of swing varies widely— a dangerous choice when most of your performers are classically oriented. He is hardly the first to encounter this problem in communicating rhythmically sophisticated music. In the 17th and 18th centuries, composers such as Couperin expected performers to understand the fluidity and spontaneity implied by *notes inégales*, as well as the variability of dotted rhythms in French Overture style. In the 20th and 21st centuries, swing has appeared in a variety of notational expressions. The term “swing” came into use around the 1930s to describe big bands, only some of which produced the

familiar rhythmic effect.⁵¹ There is still no standardized system for notation and articulation in swing, and this is a commonly identified challenge in Third Stream music when various musical traditions are combined.⁵² In Kapustin's music the composer uses both straight eighths and jazz-rock styles, and it can be difficult to identify places in which swing rhythm would be appropriate. In some cases his intention for the performer to swing is explicit. At the beginning of his *Variations*, Op. 41, as seen in Figure 49, the score indicates "Medium Swing" over a mix of dotted eighths and triplet figures. In the fifth variation (see Figure 50), it says "swinging just a bit," this time over mainly double-dotted quarter notes and sixteenths. Kapustin also writes a similarly unambiguous performance instruction, "swinging," in *Prelude VII*, Op. 53, measure 18 while the rhythms notated include dotted eighths and sixteenth notes (see Figure 51).

Figure 49. Kapustin, *Variations*, Op. 41, mm. 1-3⁵³



⁵¹ Mark Tucker, "Jazz," *Grove Music Online* (accessed 8 July 2012).

⁵² Gunther Schuller, "Third Stream," *Grove Music Online* (accessed 8 July 2012).

⁵³ Nikolai Kapustin, *Variations*, Op. 41 (Moscow: ARAM, London: Music Trading Company, 1996), 1.

Figure 50. Kapustin, Variation V, Op. 41, mm. 195-196⁵⁴



Figure 51. Kapustin, Prelude VII, Op. 53, mm. 18-22⁵⁵



More common than this clear annotation however is a more veiled means of writing a straight rhythm intended to swing. Preludes IV and XVIII, Op. 53 each use dotted eighths and sixteenths but should be played in uneven swung notes. This variability of the dot also appears in Prelude XVIII where a dotted eighth and a sixteenth, two eighths, and a quarter and eighth within triplet notation all denote the same rhythm. In the second bagatelle, Op. 59, Kapustin's own recording allows for a more precise comparison of notation versus performance practice. He writes a dotted eighth and sixteenth in several places but plays a quarter and eighth under a triplet figure instead. Conversely, in m.23 he notates a quarter and eighth under a triplet, but straightens the rhythm to a dotted

⁵⁴ Kapustin, *Variations*, Op. 41, 13.

⁵⁵ Kapustin, *Twenty-Four Preludes*, Op. 53, 27.

eighth and sixteenth in performance. This straightening of the rhythm is extremely rare in Kapustin, and this example may be considered the exception to his rule (see Figure 52).

Figure 52. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, m. 23 as written
Kapustin, Bagatelle II, m. 23 as played by Kapustin

As written



As played by Kapustin



Kapustin's conception of swing, as demonstrated by his own recordings, might seem a bit stiff and mechanical, more like the honky-tonk piano stylings of Jo Ann Castle (the novelty pianist made famous on The Lawrence Welk television show in the 1960s) than the suave and organic phrasing of pianist Nat King Cole or singer Billie Holiday. Admittedly, "swing" comes in many varieties: the recordings of tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins in the 1930s show a rhythmic intensity that contrasts with the laid-back, "cool" swing of Miles Davis in the late 1950s. Notating either one with pinpoint

accuracy would be a huge challenge, even for a sophisticated and highly trained composer. Regardless of Kapustin's own way of swinging, his notational practice allows a wide spectrum of performance interpretations.

CHAPTER IV

TEN BAGATELLES, OP. 59

The term “bagatelle” was first used in the eighteenth century by François Couperin (1668-1733) to name a rondeau from his set of ten miniatures for harpsichord. As previously mentioned, the word “bagatelle” implies something small and light. It does not give any definition regarding form, meter, or tempo, but most traditionally indicates an unpretentious, short work for piano. Beethoven was the first to use the term for short pieces for the piano and his bagatelles are easily the most famous of the genre, inflating some expectedly light pieces into giants of emotional depth and rich harmonic color. His bagatelles significantly influenced the nineteenth-century character piece.

Many musicians since Beethoven have written bagatelles but few carry much weight in the body of any composer’s repertoire. Most composers who wrote bagatelles composed them for piano alone and rarely was this term used for their most groundbreaking works. Composers such as Schubert, Diabelli, Sibelius, Saint-Saëns, Dvorák, Tchaikovsky, Smetana, and others wrote bagatelles but most were conceived as character pieces or small, relatively minor works. Franz Liszt’s *Bagatelles Sans Tonalité*, S. 216a, written in the year before his death, were notable as the first self-proclaimed atonal works of Western music. Beyond that distinction, however, few count Liszt’s bagatelles among his most landmark works. In Russia, Shostakovich broadened the traditional instrumentation for bagatelles to include an entire orchestra as heard in his Ten

Bagatelles for Piano and Orchestra. Kapustin was likely aware of many of these, and he seems to have taken the term “bagatelle” from its most common use. Kapustin’s Ten Bagatelles are all short pieces that are generally light in character, and all were written for piano solo.

Bagatelle I

The first bagatelle of Op. 59 most certainly embodies the lighthearted spirit associated with bagatelles. It has a dance-like quality, and it is one of the most accessible pieces of the set. While it could not be considered perpetual motion, this bagatelle does have uninterrupted eighth-note rhythms throughout. But the omnipresent eighth-note texture becomes background at m. 9, when a perky melody using longer note values appears, thus derailing the possibility of a purely motoric drive. The rhythmic texture implies straight eighth notes rather than swing, confirmed by Kapustin’s own recording of the work. Unlike Kapustin’s typical style, this bagatelle employs a relatively small range, and it only reaches its widest point at the last moment. The piece ends with an outward jump in both hands to the tonic F.

It is constructed with an introductory theme in octaves that appears twice, but two main themes make up the rest of the bagatelle. Of the two main themes, the first is more motivic with short repeated phrases while the second theme has a longer melodic line (see Figures 53 and 54). Both sections are characterized by motion in seconds, sometimes appearing in accompaniment and written-out ornaments and other times as a melodic feature. Regardless of the placement of the seconds motive however, it always

provides a mechanical pulse similar to repeated notes often found in piano toccatas like those of Ravel or Prokofiev.

Figure 53. Kapustin, Bagatelle I, from theme 1, mm. 9-12



Figure 54. Kapustin, Bagatelle I, from theme 2, mm. 46-47



Bagatelle II

Contrasting the extroverted, high-energy style of the previous piece, Bagatelle II is more understated and laid back. One of the few slow bagatelles, Kapustin marks “larghetto,” with a metronome marking of sixty-six to the quarter. As mentioned above, the relaxed feel created by a delay of the beat sounds like the Count Basie band playing “Second Time Around,” and the quartal voicings parallel those of Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock, as well as typical big-band voicings found in the music of Duke Ellington. The

rhythmic scheme is clearly to be swung but Kapustin's notation is inconsistent, including dotted eighths and sixteenths and triplet figures that do not always correspond with his own performance of the piece. While the first bagatelle (and many of his works) relies on clarity and precision to express the complexity in the score, this piece is more characterized by color and gesture. He still writes complex rhythmic schemes in the score, but this time they are just careful notations of what sound like improvisatory flourishes. The last four bars include thirty-seconds, sextuplets, quintuplets, triplets, and straight thirty-seconds, but once played turn out to be more ornamental than melodic (see Figure 55).

The second bagatelle is organized in two large sections, each differentiated by texture. The first section (mm. 1-22) employs a mainly homophonic chordal texture. The second is more fantasy-like with right-hand improvisatory-sounding figuration and filigree over left-hand chords. Regarding range, this bagatelle is also more contained, but expands to a five and a half octave range at the end of the piece. Even with the somewhat restricted range of the keyboard (for Kapustin), the sweep from top to bottom, as in mm. 36-37, happens so quickly that we feel as if the entire keyboard had been used. Rather than exploding out to the tonic like the previous piece, this bagatelle merely drifts outward, settling on pitches a tritone apart, thus exploiting the "airy" quality of the Lydian scale (see Figure 55).

Figure 55. Kapustin, Bagatelle II, mm. 34-37



This is another example of western influence on Kapustin’s musical style. In America, the Lydian mode is nearly ubiquitous in popular culture, and is often used to connote wonder, happiness, and magical qualities. Consider its use in film scores like *Jaws* (1975), *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), both by American composer John Williams, and television theme songs like Danny Elfman’s “The Simpsons” or Hoyt Curtin’s “The Jetsons” (see Figure 56). Music using the Lydian mode has even been identified as

particularly useful in Western studies in Music Therapy.⁵⁶ Its appearance in this bagatelle illustrates yet another example of Kapustin's usage of musical idioms from Western popular culture.

Figure 56. Lydian themes from Western popular music

from "Jaws"



Bagatelle III

When performed as a set, the exuberant start of Bagatelle III might seem a bit jarring to a listener still pondering the pensive mood set at the end of Bagatelle II.

Kapustin only marks this piece *Allegro moderato*, but the perpetual motion figuration, metronome marking (108 to the half note) and gymnastic technical requirements make this bagatelle feel and sound anything but moderate. As previously mentioned, one immediately noticeable characteristic of this bagatelle is its frequent hand crossing. A pianist performing this piece must consider the choreography of motion as well as the more expected musical concerns.

While the previous bagatelle was organized by changing texture, this piece is relatively uniform in that regard. A basically thinner texture than other pieces, this bagatelle is rather linear, though not especially contrapuntal; one line seems to propel the musical texture, whether it is the main melody or an accompanying figure. When one line stops, an accompanying line will then “pick up the slack.” In Figure 57, measures 12-16 seem to have a rather static upper line – the melody has rested on B – while the “accompanying figure” keeps the rhythm moving, quite energetically, both as constant eighth notes and eighth-note triplets.

Figure 57. Kapustin, Bagatelle III, mm. 12-16



As shown in Figure 58, measures 33-37 similarly imply a “main melody” in the upper voice with a busy obbligato that almost supercedes the upper melody. Although Kapustin’s writing does fill out the range of the keyboard, it does so by way of broken octaves and relatively open figuration.

Figure 58. Kapustin, Bagatelle III, mm. 33-37



Structurally, this bagatelle resembles an AABA song form, with a verse.

Kapustin intersperses material from a 16-bar introduction (structurally resembling the verse of a 32-bar ballad form) into the AABA format. Whereas AABA songs typically are constructed in 8-bar units, occasionally, as in Cole Porter’s classic song “Just One of Those Things,” the 8-bar unit is expanded to 16 bars. Kapustin creates his form in the third bagatelle on this model.

Though Kapustin has obvious structural models for his compositional process, he also delves into a significant degree of innovation and sophistication, as in his division of the B section (mm. 49-64). The first half, as seen in Figure 59, presents a theme in the left hand in D major, with syncopated figures in the right hand. Measures 57-64 begin with the same theme presented in the right hand in B major, 4 measures later returning to D major (see Figure 60).

Figure 59. Kapustin, Bagatelle III, mm.49-50



Figure 60. Kapustin, Bagatelle III, mm. 57-59



The melody is fragmented with short motives strung together and the main theme is defined more by its E-Dorian tonality, harmony and rhythm. Kapustin constantly exploits the range of the piano, never settling in one area, and the quick-changing harmonies in several sections (e.g., mm. 27-29, 42-47; refer to Figure 29) of this piece are equally unsettled. When one considers the constant exploration of range, rapid harmonic progressions, and technical issues of hand crossing, it becomes clear that Kapustin has created a sense of perpetual motion in every area of the piece. Though “perpetual motion” generally refers to rhythmic character, here Kapustin broadens the meaning of term to include range, harmony, and technique.

Bagatelle IV

Bagatelle IV is organized as an essentially monothematic theme and variations. Although each variation employs improvisatory-sounding passages, this bagatelle does not have the meandering fantasy air of some of Kapustin’s other works. The piece is more decidedly contrapuntal than any bagatelle so far in the set. At several points, two lines move in persistently contrary motion (mm. 9-10, mm. 17-20, mm. 33-36, mm. 64-65, mm. 87-98) or parallel motion (mm. 47-48, m. 100). The swing rhythm is notated through triplets and straight eighth notes. It is marked Allegretto in 4/4, although the metronome marking refers to a half note equaling 88. Perhaps by this, Kapustin is implying that this piece walks the line between common and cut time.

Although the driving, perpetual motion feel is missing from this piece, the work is dense with exposed, relentless contrapuntal motion. Compared to his other bagatelles,

No. 4 has barely any filigree or coloristic effects. He creates intensity through clarity and a sense of economy in orchestration. Likewise this piece is generally compact in range. There are brief moments where Kapustin explores the entire keyboard but it never becomes very expansive. Even as themes travel to different registers, the hands still stay relatively close together. He sometimes implies that a larger, bombastic section is coming through crescendos and ascending sequential motives, but the tension and building dynamic always dissolve back into the laid-back mood of the first theme. The most dramatic thematic statement where the range and dynamic are the biggest appears in m. 107. Even here each voice only encompasses three octaves at most and the forte dynamic is nothing notable (see Figure 61).

Figure 61. Kapustin, Bagatelle IV, mm. 107-108



Here Kapustin's work exhibits qualities of iconic jazz musicians who undoubtedly influenced his style. The thinner texture fully exposes the straight eighth and triplet figures that appear throughout the piece. A specific two-voice contrapuntal motive appears frequently in various forms from beginning to end (see Figure 62), and it bears striking similarity to Bud Powell's eighth and triplet licks in the bridge of "Hallucinations" (see Figure 63). The same passage could also compare to Charlie Parker's bebop idioms

in “Dewey Square” (see Figure 64). Whether or not Kapustin’s use of this classic bebop lick is a cognizant, intentional allusion to Powell and Parker or just an ingrown trait of the jazz lexicon, it is still striking that Kapustin’s notes, harmonies, and rhythmic placement mirror the phrases of bebop’s founders.

Figure 62. Kapustin, Bagatelle IV, mm. 63-65



Figure 63. Powell, “Hallucinations,” mm.12-14⁵⁷



⁵⁷ Bud Powell, “Hallucinations,” *Bud Powell: Jazz Masters* (New York: Consolidated Music Publishers, 1978), 8.

Figure 64. Parker, “Dewey Square,” mm.51-52⁵⁸

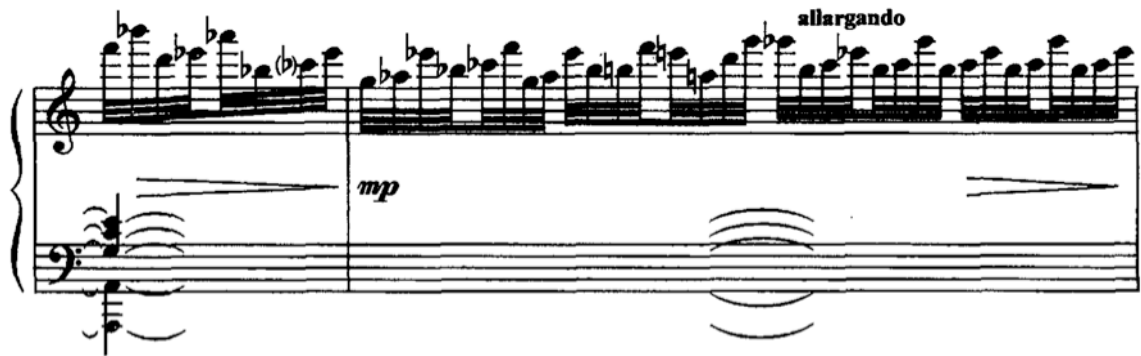


Bagatelle V

Like the second bagatelle, this piece relies more on color and the creation of an improvisatory character than clarity and rhythmic drive. Marked “Largo,” it also has the laid-back feel that provides a welcome contrast from the relentlessly driven previous two bagatelles. Bagatelle V is freely organized with fantasy-like sections connected by a single theme. Unlike in his second bagatelle, Kapustin devotes more focus to melody, developing a longer lyrical line from the original four-note motivic unit that pervades the piece. The motive also functions to create a coloristic effect as in m. 8 to help establish the improvisatory sound (see Figure 65).

⁵⁸ Charlie Parker, “Dewey Square,” *Charlie Parker Omnibook* (Studio City, CA: Atlantic Music Corporation, 1978), 14.

Figure 65. Kapustin, Bagatelle V, m. 7-8



Although the texture is mainly thin and spacious, it still easily lends itself towards a larger orchestration. Kapustin primarily writes this bagatelle with a solo line above harmonic support. It could translate into a soloist with piano accompaniment or even a larger ensemble when the arrangement thickens as in mm. 4-7. As previously mentioned, this bagatelle is redolent of Gershwin in the chromatic grace notes in mm. 22-23 (refer to Figures 21 and 22), but the expansive passage from mm. 5-7 seems more like Rachmaninoff's B minor prelude from Op. 32 in rhythm and contour (see Figure 66). Kapustin follows Rachmaninoff's pianistic gestures of outer octaves in both hands, interspersed with quick chords in the middle register. A pianist who has studied and mastered Rachmaninoff's Prelude X in B Minor will have acquired the technique required in ms. 5-7 of Kapustin's Bagatelle V (see Figure 67).

Figure 66. Rachmaninoff, Op. 32 No. 10, mm. 40-43

The image displays a musical score for Rachmaninoff's Op. 32 No. 10, measures 40-43. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The first system (measures 40-41) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a complex accompaniment. The treble staff has a *dim.* marking over a triplet of eighth notes in measure 40, followed by a *6p* marking in measure 41. The bass staff has a *poco cresc.* marking in measure 41. The second system (measures 42-43) continues the melodic and accompanimental lines. The treble staff has a *leggiere* marking in measure 42 and a *dim.* marking in measure 43. The bass staff has a *mf* marking in measure 42. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 67. Kapustin, Bagatelle V, mm. 5-7



Bagatelle VI

The sixth bagatelle embodies the full range of styles and technical devices found in Kapustin's works. It goes from lighthearted to intense, full of coloristic gestures one moment and intricate, driven passagework the next. Kapustin goes from writing jazzy dance-like sections reminiscent of a 1930s musical (Jerome Kern's *Roberta*, 1935 or George and Ira Gershwin's songs from *Shall We Dance*, 1937) to rich, chromatic sweeping gestures of a nineteenth-century Romantic composer as in Figures 68 and 69.

Figure 68. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, mm. 82-83



Figure 69. Chopin's "Revolutionary" Etude, mm. 9-10

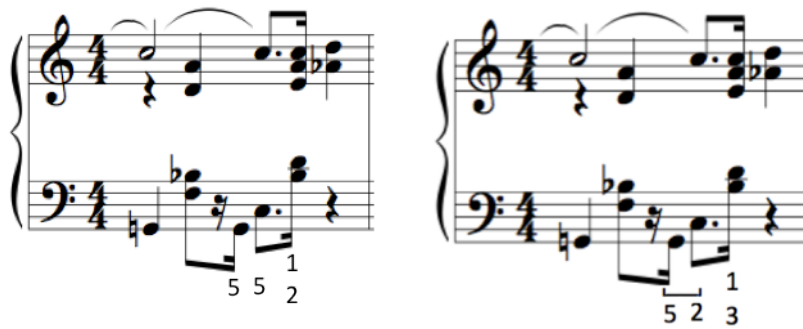


This is the second example, although not as explicit, of a reference to Chopin's "Revolutionary" Etude (refer to Figures 19 and 20), a sign of how deeply Kapustin was steeped in the classics of piano literature. Marked "Comodo," it begins with a deceptively easy-sounding feel but the piece builds in intensity and becomes increasingly expansive. It resembles his Pastorale etude from Op. 40 in the way the initially innocent theme spins out of control to a frenzied, driven conclusion.

Like many of Kapustin's pieces, this bagatelle is made up of two sixteen-bar themes that appear in varied repetition throughout the piece. A tuneful, casual-sounding primary theme is presented at first, with blocked left-hand chords. The angular accompanimental motion in the left hand presents some technical challenges greater than the character of the piece indicates but mainly this section should sound effortless and

lighthearted. For instance, the left-hand passage in m. 4 implies a Gm7 chord in the first half of the bar, followed by a C9 on the third beat. If the pianist plays the Gm7 chord with thumb and second finger on the upper two notes and the fifth finger on the bass (constituting a tenth, standard in all stride voicings), the challenge will be to jump to the root of the C9 chord within a sixteenth-note, made even trickier if the root of each chord is played with the fifth finger (see Figure 70).

Figure 70. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, m. 4, with alternate fingering



As each of the themes occurs, variation by ornamentation and improvisatory passagework complicates the texture. For instance, the example below (Figure 71) shows three versions from the second theme in various places in the bagatelle.

Figure 71. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, mm. 16-18, 33-35, 64-66

m16

m.33

m.64

The structure and form are always clear but fantasy-like variation passages give an improvisatory feel. The first theme is also subject to variation, and its initial motive is almost unrecognizable when it reappears in m. 80 (see Figure 72).

Figure 72. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, mm. 1-3, mm. 80-82



Many of Kapustin's main influences in jazz and the classical repertoire appear in this bagatelle. Quartal voicings and double-time licks evoke Kapustin's jazz influences Duke Ellington and Bud Powell (see Figures 73 and 74).

Figure 73. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, m. 40
Ellington, "Dusk," m. 6



Figure 74. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, mm. 35-37
Powell, “A Night in Tunisia,” mm. 1-2

Kapustin



Powell



Contrastingly, in measure 74, we suddenly find ourselves in a Romantic style with arpeggiating passages and broad left-hand passagework that seems more like Rachmaninoff than Ellington (see Figures 75 and 76). This time the drastic setting change completely alters the sound of the bagatelle. Measures 74-77 of Kapustin's Bagatelle VI mirror the dramatic sweep of measures 21-22 of Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto, another sign of Kapustin's immersion in Russian Romanticism.

Figure 75. Kapustin, Bagatelle VI, mm. 74-77

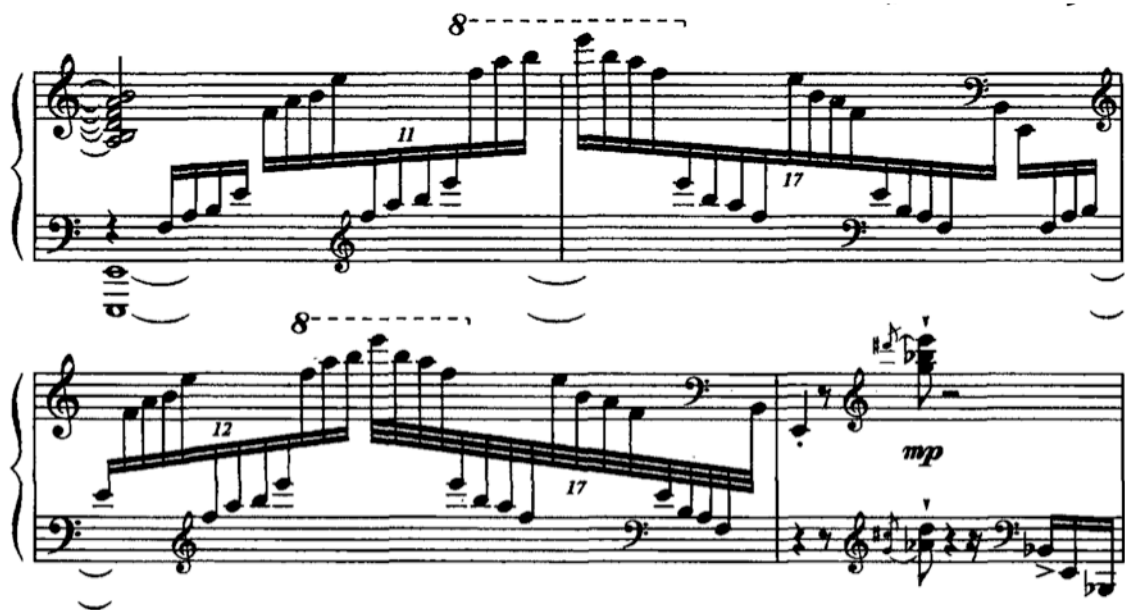
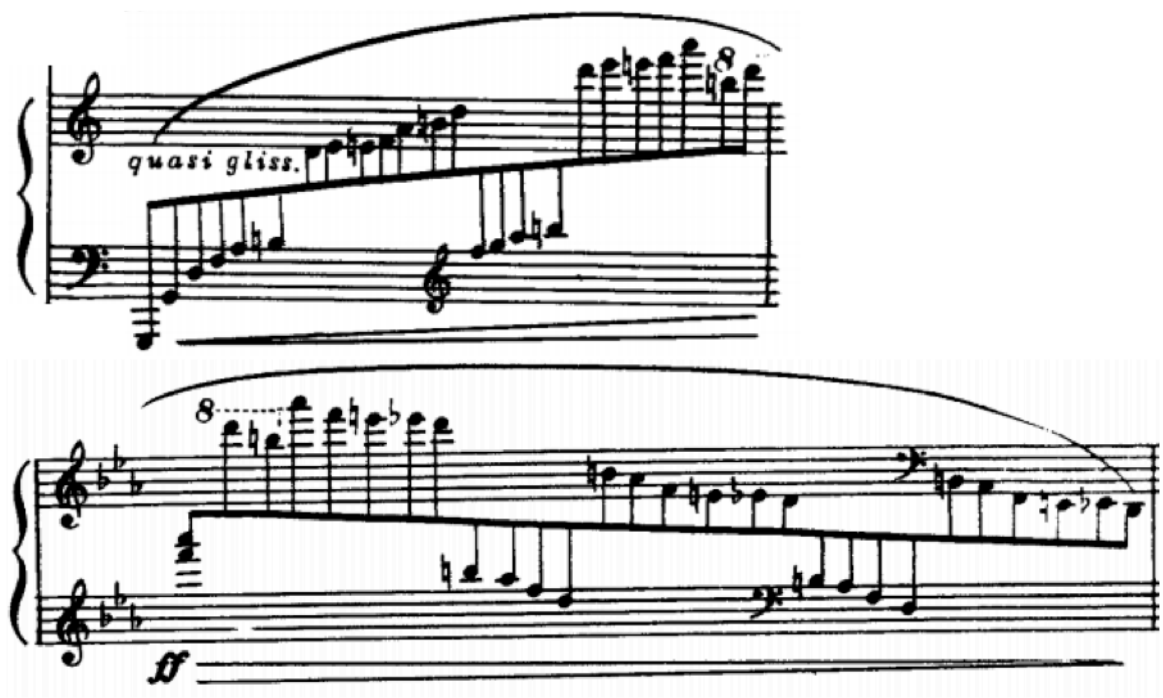


Figure 76. Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No. 2, III, mm. 21-22



What is perhaps most striking about this Bagatelle is how Kapustin begins with an innocent, hummable tune but morphs into a virtuosic, thick-textured etude. It is true that the principal melody of mm. 1-4 is incorporated in the etude-like mm. 80-83. (Refer to Figure 72.) But the innocent mood of the beginning has been totally transformed into a cinematic scene showing apocalyptic drama.

Bagatelle VII

Kapustin makes it evident that the energy level of the opus is maintained by beginning this piece in cut time with the marking “Vivace.” Structurally it presents two themes in varied repetition, each theme organized in sixteen-bar units. The form is ABABA with a codetta. The alternating A and B themes become increasingly free and improvisatory as the piece progresses. Both themes emphasize compact clarity and precision over thick-textured harmony or wide range. The first theme is lighter and busier, with eighth-note patterns that resemble bebop licks. The opening gesture recalls the opening of Charlie Parker’s “She Rote,” mirroring almost exactly the rhythmic structure but also following similar intervallic shapes (see Figures 77).

Figure 77. Parker, "She Rote", m. 1⁵⁹
Kapustin, Bagatelle VII, mm. 1-2



The second theme is more grounded and stays within a smaller range. This second theme recalls aspects of the first theme of Bagatelle VI, both emphasizing staccato quarter-note movement in a moderate 4/4 meter. Burt Bacharach's 1969 classic "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" also used staccato quarter-note movement, more in the chordal accompaniment (like Bagatelle VI). It is possible that Kapustin heard Bacharach during the American composer's heyday in the 70s (see Figure 78).

⁵⁹ Parker, *Charlie Parker Omnibook*, 34.

Figure 78. Bacharach, "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on my Head"⁶⁰
 Kapustin, Bagatelle VII, theme 2, mm. 17-20



Each theme of Bagatelle VII is linked by a motive of repeated seconds that recalls the first bagatelle. In the first theme, it appears as a descending half step in the melody but in the second theme and repeated occurrences of the first theme it is used to explore its use as harmonic support in various ranges on the keyboard, and in inverted form (see Figures 79 and 80).

⁶⁰ Burt Bacharach, *The Songs of Bacharach and David* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2000), 69.

Figure 79. Kapustin, Bagatelle VII, mm. 1-2



Figure 80. Kapustin, Bagatelle VII, mm. 19-20 (from theme 2)



With each thematic statement, the setting expands in range, dynamic, and texture, and it reaches the pinnacle in m. 57 with theme 2 (see Figure 81).

Figure 81. Kapustin, Bagatelle VII, mm. 57-60



This might lead listeners to expect a similarly dramatic rendition of the first theme. Instead Kapustin defies expectation and presents a more restrained iteration. From this point on, Kapustin presents increasingly fragmented, fantasy-like passages. Then, rather than expanding to a larger-scale, rhapsodic fantasy, Kapustin reminds us that his bagatelles are only small, light works and proceeds to take everything down in scale and intensity. In m. 83 we seem to enter an entirely Romantic-style passage with two-note motives transposed for melodic and harmonic purposes. The theme continues to fragment, devolving until the final few measures when all that is left is the two-note motive that propels the performer to the final cadence.

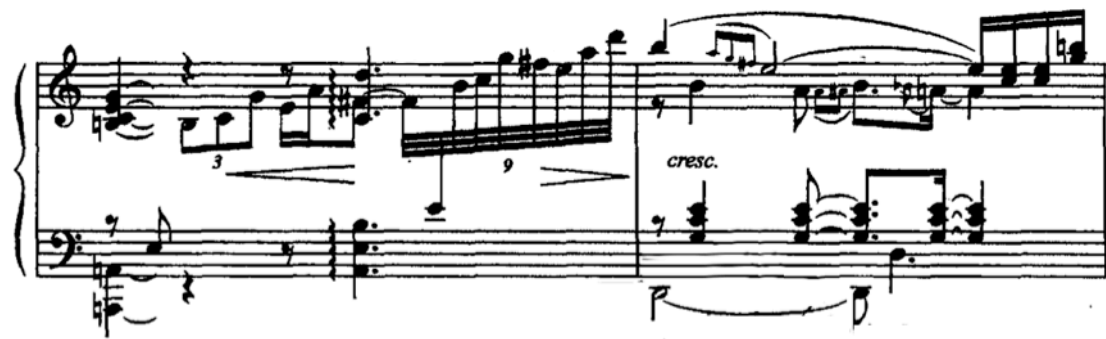
Bagatelle VIII

This eighth bagatelle by Kapustin is one of the more expansive yet most understated pieces of the set. Its *adagio* tempo and wide range evoke a lazy, yet spacious mood rather than a sense of frenzy through the improvisatory-sounding passagework. In this work Kapustin focuses more on subtleties in color and a nuanced rhythmic pulse. He plays with darkness and light, contrasting low homophonic settings (as in the first measures, shown in Figure 82) with a brighter, higher-voiced register and glittering filigree over harmonic support (see Figure 83).

Figure 82. Kapustin, Bagatelle VIII, mm. 1-2



Figure 83. Kapustin, Bagatelle VIII, mm. 5-6



Kapustin places graceful gestures over a hazy, coloristic harmonic support but unifies the entire bagatelle with an often-embedded motivic melody that almost exclusively appears in fragments. The evocative nature of this piece shows Kapustin's appreciation for impressionist composers like Debussy and Ravel.

Although as a whole this piece is more introspective and minimal with none of the motoric drive of other bagatelles, it is hardly monotonous or simplistic. It has intensity without being bombastic. After its darker introduction, Kapustin continues the bagatelle with light, easy filigree decorating a slower (for Kapustin) harmonic motion. At first the improvisatory ornamental figures and veiled rhythmic pulse create a suspended sense of

time but as the bagatelle progresses that same passagework builds tension with increased continuous thirty-second note passages in various compressed divisions (quintuplets and sextuplets) until they culminate to a four-octave glissando. Kapustin does not follow this section into any kind of melodramatic display as one might expect however and the right-hand figuration immediately begins to break up into smaller divisions. Soon the bagatelle regains the delicacy and spaciousness it once embodied. The piece ends in the same way it begins with regards to mood and texture. There is only one fleeting reference to the earlier intensity when a brief motivic, improvisatory gesture appears with an *accelerando* and *ritardando* in the penultimate measure.

Bagatelle IX

Whereas some of Kapustin's longest bagatelles have minimal or single themes with much variation this shorter bagatelle includes three lesser-developed main themes. The first appears in the introduction and coda. This theme introduces the bagatelle with a completely different kind of energy but nearly identical four-note rhythmic motive of Bagatelle VIII (see Figures 84 and 85).

Figure 84. Kapustin, Bagatelle VIII, mm. 1-2



Figure 85. Kapustin, Bagatelle IX, m. 1



Whereas the eighth bagatelle creates a sense of calm in response to the introductory motive, the ninth uses it as a means of creating suspense. Instead of presenting longer sustained notes and focusing on harmonic color as he did in the eighth, Kapustin uses rhythmic energy derived from the shorter motivic fragments. He uses this disjointed initial theme to conceal any perceivable direction of the bagatelle. Kapustin writes motion in half steps, sevenths, and fourths. No single voice moves more than an octave away from its starting pitch in the first eight bars. The introduction is not groundbreaking or dramatically challenging but it sets a shadowy tone. One might guess the following

music to be equally angular and potentially dark but Kapustin's introduction leads into a very light, dance-like theme. The sevenths and fourths of the preceding passage give way to almost ingenuously sweet and cheerful sixths and thirds. In the liner notes of Marc-André Hamelin's recording of this piece, Jed Distler compares the bagatelle to a Brazilian *chorino*.⁶¹ The *chorino*, or *choros* is a style of Brazilian popular music, and this comparison seems natural for such a catchy and accessible piece. The singable theme, mm. 9-23, also sounds as if it could have derived from or been inspired by the world of American popular songs or musical theatre works like those from Cole Porter's "Anything Goes" (1934) or Stephen Sondheim's "All I Need is the Girl" from *Gypsy* (1959). This stylistic comparison also rings true regarding the structural organization. Another AABA form with verse, this piece is also divided into sixteen-bar sections like a thirty-two bar ballade. Although few would describe any of Kapustin's music as simplistic, his proclivity towards formal clarity and regular (often sixteen-bar) sections give his works a comfortable organization. Given the complexity of his work, it is surprising to find the predictable clarity in the structure of so much of Kapustin's music.

Though as a whole this bagatelle is not extremely broad in range, the theme flits around several octaves, leaving the formerly conservative motion behind. The cheerful theme gives way to a heavier B theme. An interesting feature of this theme is its relation to the first. While it is not exact, B begins with a motive that implies an inversion of the A theme (see Figure 86).

⁶¹ Jed Distler, Notes to Kapustin: Piano Music, Vol. 2, Hyperion CDA67433, 2004.

Figure 86. Kapustin, Bagatelle IX, Theme A, m. 9; Theme B, m. 27

Theme A



Theme B



As a whole this bagatelle is generally compact, organized, and demands clarity and detail work from the performer.

Bagatelle X

The tenth bagatelle completes the set with similar motivic features as the first with repeated seconds that create a toccata-like texture. Rhythmically it is persistently motoric but not frantic, and the predominantly transparent writing emphasizes rhythmic clarity over coloristic effect. Texturally this piece is spacious and includes a wide range of nearly constant eighth-note passages. As with several of the previous bagatelles, there is a good bit of improvisatory-sounding passagework that emerges from the primary

structure but basically the bagatelle is in AABA form with an introduction and codetta. The main outer A sections are organized with statements of a theme that broaden and intensify with each repetition (but never modulate). The B section gives way to a more relaxed melody over an occasionally almost atonal walking bass line. In mm. 53-55 as shown in Figure 87, Kapustin writes a left-hand part with ten non-repeating consecutive pitches only two shy of a complete dodecaphonic set.

Figure 87. Kapustin, Bagatelle X, mm. 53-55



Like A, B repeats its sixteen-measure theme, but this time it leads into a more independently developmental section comprised of two twelve-bar units. In the return of A the theme is only stated once before running eighths spin out of the main texture into triplet passagework that retransitions to the introductory theme. Composing a fittingly theatrical finale to the set Kapustin writes a gradual diminuendo and ritardando that give way to silence on a fermata, then a subito forte and “a tempo” marking drive one final phrase of the main theme to a definitive, fortissimo conclusion.

The upbeat mood of this final bagatelle certainly embodies the *Giocosamente* marking at the beginning but one wonders if Kapustin is enjoying a more private joke with this last piece. The last half of this opus, with the exception of the ninth, includes bagatelles with key signatures that indicate C major (or A minor) but none of them share that key center. By the ninth bagatelle Kapustin seems to surrender to writing a key

signature that matches its tonality (in this case D-flat major). But finally the last bagatelle centers on C with the same, now corresponding, key signature.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As revealed through this overview, several themes emerge in the Ten Bagatelles, each of which demonstrates the previously discussed stylistic characteristics of Kapustin's music in general. Kapustin's educational background in the classical realm is undeniable, given the gestures and direct quotations from composers from the canon of traditional solo piano literature. Equally prevalent are similar compositional devices from the jazz idiom that caught Kapustin's attention outside of his conservatory studies during his years in school. In fact, the jazz element is always present in Kapustin's music, and it often overshadows other aspects of his style. Kapustin credits Oscar Peterson, but given the range of influences and considering that Peterson's style could not be discussed without referencing Charlie Parker and Bud Powell, the original main source of Kapustin's style is enigmatic. For example, the "scrunch" voicings in nearly all the bagatelles, specifically seen in the discussions on Bagatelles III and VI, could have likely come from Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, or Maurice Ravel, and Kapustin was certainly aware of them all. In Bagatelle II the mood evokes stylistic qualities of Count Basie, while voicings reflect influences of Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, and Duke Ellington. Kapustin directly quotes George Gershwin in his fifth bagatelle, and gestures towards Bud Powell's "Hallucinations" in the fourth. Jazz is never missing from Kapustin's music, but to say that this is his singular influence would be misguided. American

popular music of the early 1970s also emerges, as argued in the discussion of Burt Bacharach's possible influence, as well as American television ("The Jetsons," "The Simpsons") and movies ("E.T.") on Kapustin's compositions.

Like all his works, Kapustin's bagatelles run the stylistic, chronological, and geographical gamut. Jazz makes up a major part of Kapustin's bagatelles, but atonal techniques, in this treatise referred to as "faux dodecaphony," also appear. Despite the importance of free jazz exponents like Cecil Taylor (b. 1929) and Ornette Coleman (b. 1930), atonal procedures are relatively rare in jazz. Improvisation in jazz has traditionally been and continues to be based on a chord pattern. Even when Kapustin employs his "faux dodecaphony," clear chords and tonal centers are apparent. His music does not belong to the free jazz movement, even with his ventures into atonal procedures. Though the bagatelles exhibit fewer instances of the "faux dodecaphony" found in Kapustin's other works, the technique does appear in the B section of Bagatelle X. Furthermore, the bagatelles do frequently employ richly chromatic harmonies as seen in the sixth bagatelle's references to Rachmaninoff and Chopin. Textures, figurations, and moods of Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Ravel are equally defining, while Kapustin's bebop-inflected lines (as in Bagatelle VII) clearly mirror Charlie Parker. Kapustin's affinity for using technical devices of hand crossing and wide keyboard range is also well represented in these bagatelles. Hand crossing is a major motivic characteristic of the third bagatelle, while others employ the device to facilitate the wide keyboard range (as in Bagatelles V, VIII, and X).

Kapustin's stylistic crossover functions in making jazz more accessible to classical musicians, but the reverse is less true. His intellectual notation could be considered cumbersome, writing chords that might be "correct" by traditional rules of Western music theory but could be easily replaced by more accessible spelling. While a classical player might appreciate the level of notational detail, a jazz musician might see it more as a restrictive quality. Kapustin's notation of swing rhythms varies among triplets, straight eighths, and dotted rhythms, although his performance intentions can sometimes only be known through the composer's own recordings.

This amalgam of many idioms and influences constitutes the most distinctive quality of Kapustin's musical language. While John Salmon succinctly described Kapustin's style as "Rachmaninov reincarnated as Oscar Peterson,"⁶² many classical composers—Ludwig van Beethoven, Frederic Chopin, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Serge Prokofiev—seem completely integrated with their counterparts from the jazz and pop world—Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Oscar Peterson, Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, Burt Bacharach, Hoyt Curtin, John Williams, and Danny Elfman. While each of these aspects and distinct influences on Kapustin's works is important in describing his musical language, it is the synthesis of these qualities that most aptly defines his unique style. Like any great composer, naming the stylistic sources does not explain a unique voice. One easily traces Bach's and Haydn's influence on Beethoven or Mozart's and Bellini's influence on Chopin; but Beethoven sounds only like Beethoven and Chopin

⁶² John Salmon, Liner notes to "Kapustin: Piano Sonata No. 15," performed by John Salmon, Naxos 8.570532, 2008.

sounds only like Chopin, even after their sources have been identified. Adding to the mystery in describing Kapustin's compositional voice are his Ukrainian and Russian roots. Scriabin's Slavic pain and mystery, Shostakovich's Soviet socialist realism, and Prokofiev's searing modernism are strangely absent from Kapustin's musical style. While his music does have intensity and hypertechnical flair, trademarks of most 19th- and 20th-century Russian piano music, Kapustin reflects an esthetic synthesis virtually unknown in the music of any of his contemporaries. Few other composers of his geographical and chronological demographic synthesize so effortlessly the moods of Serge Rachmaninoff and Count Basie, or the textures of Maurice Ravel and Charlie Parker.

To most pianists, the bagatelle genre immediately evokes Beethoven's opp. 33, 119, and 126 or Tchernin's immensely popular Op. 5 set. Given the compositional craft, inviting idiom, and pianistic flair of Kapustin's Ten Bagatelles, they are surely destined for equal inclusion in the canon of piano repertoire. Kapustin's style defies conventional labels and introduces an entirely new voice to the body of solo piano literature. The Ten Bagatelles provide a microcosm of the composer's overall style, and are well worth the attention of performers and champions of new music.

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